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16 May 74 - 17:28Z

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SUBJECT: TRAVELING PRESS REPORTAGE: RADIO/TV, MAY 16, 1974

FOR ANDERSON FROM HARE

1. THURSDAY MORNING: MA'ALOT AND AFTERMATH CONTINUE TO BE HIGHLIGHTED IN MEDIA, GENERALLY RELATED TO EXPECTED INCREASED DIFFICULTY FOR SECRETARY IN WORKING SKR DISENGAGEMENT.

(A) KALB (CBS-TV) -- THE NEGOTIATIONS RESUME THIS MORNING, KISSINGER VISITING EBAN'S HOME; BUT THERE IS NO MISTAKING ONE FACT -- THE MASSACRE AT MA'ALOT HAS STRIPPED THE ISRAELIS OF ANY INCLINATION TO MAKE FURTHER CONCESSIONS TO SYRIA, ONE OF AT LEAST TWO COUNTRIES IN THIS AREA WHICH HARBORS ARAB TERRORISTS. LEBANON IS THE OTHER. THIS MEANS THAT KISSINGER'S EFFORT TO COAX A DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT OUT OF ISRAEL AND SYRIA IS PROBABLY GOING TO FAIL, AT LEAST DURING THIS CURRENT ROUND OF SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY BETWEEN JERUSALEM AND DAMASCUS. THE ONLY THING THAT COULD SAVE IT NOW IS IF PRESIDENT ASSAD OF SYRIA SHOULD SUDDENLY SWITCH POSITIONS AND DROP SOME OF HIS UNACCEPTABLE DEMANDS. KISSINGER LEAVES FOR DAMASCUS WITH ONLY A SLIM HOPE OF THAT. HE RETURNS TO ISRAEL LATER TODAY, AND HE PLANS TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON THIS WEEKEND, HAVING COMPLETED HIS LONGEST OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENT BUT WITHOUT THE DEAL HE WANTED.

(B) VALERIANI (NBC NEWS OVER WAVA RADIO) -- TIME IS RUNNING OUT ON THE KISSINGER MISSION, AND TODAY'S FIFTH ROUND-TRIP SHUTTLE TO DAMASCUS MAY BE THE LAST ONE BEFORE THE SECRETARY OF STATE RETURNS TO WASHINGTON AT THE END OF THE WEEK. A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SYRIA ON SEPARATING THEIR FORCES ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS NOW APPEARS UNATTAINABLE BY THE WEEKEND. BUT BEFORE KISSINGER LEAVES THE AREA, HE WOULD LIKE TO GET THE TWO SIDES TO AGREE ON AT LEAST THE BASIC ISSUE OF THE TALKS, WHERE THE LINE OF

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SEPARATION SHOULD BE DRAWN, AND THAT IS NOW HIS PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE.

(C) KALB ("FIRST-LINE REPORT") -- MA'ALOT NOW JOINS QUIRYAT SHIMONA AND LOD AIRPORT, SITES IN ISRAEL WHERE ARAB TERRORISM TOUCHED OFF DEATH, AGONY AND SUFFERING. MRS. GOLDA MEIR, WHO IS 76 BUT LOOKS OLDER THAN TIME, HER FACE LINED WITH DECADES OF STRUGGLING FOR THE SURVIVAL OF ISRAEL, APPEARED LAST NIGHT OVER ISRAEL RADIO AND TV REPORTING TO HER PEOPLE ABOUT THE MA'ALOT MASSACRE. SHE WARNED THAT ISRAEL WOULD, AS SHE PUT IT, SEVER THE HAND OF ANYONE WHO HARMED A CHILD OF ISRAEL AND ESTIMATED 16 ISRAEL SCHOOL CHILDREN WERE KILLED, 70 WOUNDED YESTERDAY WHEN ISRAELI ARMY TROOPS STORMED A SCHOOL HOUSE IN THE NORTHERN ISRAELI TOWN OF MA'ALOT, A SCHOOL HOUSE CONTROLLED BY THREE HEAVILY ARMED ARAB TERRORISTS REPRESENTING A GROUP CALLED THE POPULAR DEMOCRATIC FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE. THEY CONTROLLED A PRECIOUS INNOCENT CARGO, ABOUT 86 ISRAELI SCHOOL CHILDREN OF THE NINTH TO ELEVENTH GRADES.

IT IS ASSUMED HERE THAT ISRAEL WILL NOW STRIKE HARD AGAINST TERRORIST BASES IN LEBANON AND SYRIA. IT IS FURTHER ASSUMED THAT THESE STRIKES WILL COMPLICATE SECRETARY KISSINGER'S EFFORTS TO DISENGAGE SYRIAN AND ISRAELI TROOPS FROM THE GOLAN FRONT, PERHAPS EVEN CRIPPLE THOSE EFFORTS. MA'ALOT WAS MADNESS BEYOND HUMAN COMPREHENSION. THE ARAB TERRORISTS SNEAKED IN SOMETIME DURING THE NIGHT OF MAY 14. BY DAWN, MAY 15, THEY WERE ALREADY IN CONTROL OF THE SCHOOL HOUSE. 20 OR 30 SCHOOL CHILDREN ESCAPED. THE OTHERS, UP TO 90 OF THEM, WERE HELD HOSTAGE. MRS. MEIR WAS IMMEDIATELY AWAKENED WITH THE NEWS. SHE RUSHED TO HER JERUSALEM OFFICE, GOT THERE BY 6:45 A.M.

THE FIRST ARAB TERRORIST DEMAND WAS THAT ISRAEL RELEASE MORE THAN 20 OTHER TERRORISTS HELD IN JAIL FOR VARIOUS CRIMES. ISRAEL NORMALLY REJECTS SUCH DEMANDS, NEVER YIELDING TO BLACKMAIL. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, ISRAEL REVERSED HERSELF. SHE AGREED TO RELEASE THE TERRORISTS IF THE CHILDREN WERE RELEASED. THE TERRORISTS SAID THEY WOULD NEGOTIATE ONLY WITH THE FRENCH AND ROMANIAN AMBASSADORS; THEY SAID, HOWEVER, THEY COULD NOT BEGIN THE NEGOTIATION UNTIL THE AMBASSADORS HAD A CERTAIN PASSWORD FROM DAMASCUS OR BEIRUT. FIRST THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR AND THEN THE ROMANIAN WENT TO MA'ALOT BUT THE TERRORISTS WOULD NOT SEE THEM UNLESS THEY HAD THE PASSWORD. TIME KEPT RUSHING BY; BY 6:00 P.M. THE TERRORISTS HAD WARNED THEY WOULD BLOW UP THE SCHOOL HOUSE WITH THE CHILDREN INSIDE. THE ISRAELI CABINET WORKED FEVERISHLY THROUGHOUT THE DAY. WHEN THE TERRORISTS KEPT INSISTING ON THE PROPER PASSWORD AND IT DID NOT COME, THE ISRAELI LEADERS DECIDED THEY WOULD HAVE TO TRY TO SAVE SOME OF THE CHILDREN RATHER THAN STAND BY AND WATCH ALL OF THEM MASSACRED.

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BY 5:45 P.M., WITH ONLY 15 MINUTES TO GO, THE ISRAELI CABINET DECIDED IT HAD NO CHOICE. IT ORDERED THE ARMY TO STORM THE SCHOOL HOUSE AND TRY TO KILL THE ARAB TERRORISTS. THEY ONLY WOUNDED THEM AT FIRST, AND THE TERRORISTS UNLOADED HAND GRENADES AT THE CHILDREN. THIS NATION, WHICH HAS SUFFERED SO INTENSIVELY SINCE ITS BIRTH A QUARTER OF A CENTURY AGO, SUFFERED SOME MORE TODAY. THE CHILDREN WILL SOON BE BURIED, BUT NOT THE DISTRUST AND THE HATRED FED BY MASSACRES SUCH AS LOD, QUIRYAT SHIMONA AND NOW MA'ALOT. BLOOD SANCTIFIES POLICY AND FRESH BLOOD HAS NOW BEEN SPILLED, AND ONLY A DIPLOMATIC MIRACLE CAN NOW STOP A NEW SPIRAL OF VIOLENCE IN THIS GLORIOUS, RICH AND TRAGIC PART OF THE WORLD.

2. WEDNESDAY EVENING: MA'ALOT LED ALL NETWORKS WITH FILM PIECES FROM TOM FENTON/KALB FOR CBS, BARRY DUNSMORE/BILL SEAMENS FOR ABC, AND DAVID BURRINGTON FOR NBC. KALB'S ACCOUNT WAS ESSENTIALLY COVERED IN HIS THURSDAY MORNING "FIRST-LINER." DUNSMORE HAD MCCLOSKEY ON FILM READING SECRETARY'S STATEMENT. JIM ANDERSON, ON WTOP RADIO FOR GROUP, EARLIER IN AFTERNOON QUOTED SENIOR AMERICAN OFFICIAL AS SAYING, "IF THE TROUBLES HAVE BEEN DUE TO HATE AND SUSPICION, IT IS NOW MULTIPLIED TEN-FOLD."

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